

for years merely a question how long he could dodge destruction. Happily he had, in the tenacity, the love of liberty of his Dutch compatriots, an unfailing source of strength. Without these factors to work with, William's career would have been a heroic but a hopeless tragedy. The expedition of 1572, in reliance on the co-operation of Coligny, was as disastrous a failure as that of 1569. The Massacre of St Bartholomew, the strategy of Alva drove him once more a fugitive across the Rhine, and forced his brother Louis and his Huguenot followers to capitulate at Mons. The fugitive found a refuge at Delft in Holland ; and here, in those Dutch fens on the fringe of the ocean, he stood at bay with his heroic Hollanders, and baffled all the efforts of Alva and his successors, Requesens, Don John, and Parma, to dislodge him. Henceforth, as he wrote to his brother John, " he was determined to retire to Holland and Zeeland for the maintenance of the cause, and to make his grave there." The capture of Brill and Flushing some months before (April 1572) by the wild Sea Beggars, gave him the command of the sea. This exploit is celebrated by Motley as the laying of the foundation stone of the Dutch Republic. The conclusion is, of course, an exaggeration. The foundation stone of the Dutch Republic is rather the Union of Dordrecht, where the Estates of Holland met three months after the attack on Brill, and, identifying themselves with William's policy, solemnly recognised the Prince of Orange as the lawful representative of their sovereign, granted him in this capacity a subsidy in aid of the war against the tyranny of Alva, agreed to tolerate both religions, and undertook not to make terms with Philip except by mutual consent (July 1572). William did not altogether approve the exploit of Luiney and Treslong in seizing Brill. He did not yet perceive the strength which the wild Sea Beggars could bring to his cause. He still believed that liberty might be conquered by invasions with German and Huguenot levies. He soon learned to think otherwise. It was from the sea, and especially from the Batavian fens, that Spain was to be worsted ; not by pitched battles with raw and mutinous troops against the best drilled soldiers of the age. The exploit of Luiney and Treslong was, in truth, the first check to the Spanish domination, the first substantial success for the patriot cause. The seizure of Brill was an accident,